

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000575

SIPDIS

LONDON FOR POL/RIEDEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/19/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ETRD](#) [PREF](#) [PINR](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER DEPARTS FOR INDIA, FIRST TRIP
ABROAD THIS TERM

REF: KATHMANDU 467

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHAEL E. MALINOWSKI, REASONS 1.5(B),(D)

1. (C) Summary. Securing Indian assistance in Nepal's battle against the Maoist insurgency will be Nepali Prime Minister Deuba's primary goal in his March 20-26 official visit to India. He will ask his counterparts both for materiel assistance and for help in apprehending Nepali Maoists in India. Indian diplomatic sources here hold up the visit as evidence of their country's support and concern for their northern neighbor. Nepal will also be looking to discuss trade issues, border security and Bhutanese refugees. Deuba will visit Calcutta for meetings with state leaders there before returning home. End Summary.

Insurgency Dominates PM's First Trip Abroad

2. (SBU) Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba left Kathmandu March 20 on a week-long official visit to India, his first trip abroad since taking office in July, 2001. Before leaving, the Prime Minister indicated that Nepal's Maoist insurgency will dominate bilateral discussions. Deuba plans to ask the Indians for materiel assistance and help in the form of arresting Maoist leaders - some of whom either live in India or travel frequently across the open border - and in cracking down on Maoist operations in India, including financial transactions through Indian banks.

Indians Play Up Visit

3. (C) In a call with Ambassador, the Indian Ambassador related that PM Vajpayee had made time to receive Deuba despite a schedule made crowded by domestic problems, and that receiving Deuba with full state honors should be interpreted as a clear signal of India's support for Nepal and its concern about the current situation. Indian Embassy Poloff reiterated this point, and added that Vajpayee had now cancelled several trips abroad in order to deal with crises at home. (Note: The Indian Ambassador added that he had weighed in with Nepal's former Prime Minister G.P. Koirala, asking the elder statesman - who has had good relations with India throughout his career - to lay off his political maneuvering to unseat Deuba, on the grounds that stability in Nepal is essential at this time. Note.)

Other Issues: Trade, Border Issues, Refugees

4. (SBU) Trade issues are also on Deuba's agenda. Deuba plans to bring up revisions to the Nepal-India trade treaty - including quotas on four of Nepal's primary exports to India (Reftel) - and a still-inoperable dry port container facility on the border. Other long-standing issues, including a border dispute at Kalapani and an Indian embankment built near Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace, will be in Deuba's talking points. Deuba stated that he would ask New Delhi to play a positive role in resolving the Bhutanese refugee issue.

Why Calcutta?

5. (C) Deuba's Indian hosts plan to take him on a side trip to Calcutta. The Indian Embassy here told us that they like to take their guests out of Delhi, and Calcutta was chosen because of Nepal's shared border with West Bengal. State leaders would call on Deuba during his stay in Calcutta, the Indians told us. Some Nepalese Maoists are believed to operate out of West Bengal, and in the past have met Nepali political leaders in the Indian city of Siliguri. Speculation is rife in Kathmandu about the possibility of a meeting in West Bengal between Deuba and insurgent leaders.

Comment

6. (C) India was the first country to declare the Maoists "terrorists" after the insurgents broke the ceasefire in late November, 2001. Since then they have done little, and reportedly Maoist leaders and cadres continue to shuttle back and forth across the open border. India appears to be using

Deuba's visit to show their care and concern, but not necessarily in more than a symbolic way. In Calcutta the intent may be to ask for cooperation directly from the local (Marxist) government.

MALINOWSKI